

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT Organization, Vessels, and Routes of Sovtanker/
(fnu) Serikh

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1. Up to the fall of 1932 the Black Sea Shipping Administration (UChP - Upravleniya Chernomorskovo Parakhodstvo) in Odessa had a tanker section. In the autumn of 1932 this section was made separate and its headquarters was moved to Tuapse. For about two years thereafter it was called the Black Sea Petroleum Shipping Administration (Upravleniya Neftenalivnovo Chernomorskovo Parakhodstvo). Then in about late 1934 the name of the organization was changed to Sovtanker. In 1932 all the tankers had had the name of their home port changed from Odessa to Tuapse. Sovtanker was a separate organization under the People's Commissariat of Water Transport (Narodni Kommissariat Vodnovo Transporta) in Moscow. A building was constructed for Sovtanker in Tuapse during 1932 - 1933. It was located in the port alongside the other port offices and was built on a slope rising from the sea. The structure had three or four stories, was white in color, and was made of ferro-concrete.

2. The Director (Nachaln'ik) of Sovtanker was (fnu) Serikh. He held his position from late 1932 until at least 1941.

man from the anchorage of Gagri, near Tuapse. He finished gymnasium (high school) in Gagri. He was a capable individual and had received training for administrative duties in Moscow. Soon thereafter he became Director of Sovtanker. He did a good job and was said to be a decent person. He was of medium height, strongly built, blond, and had a round face. In 1932 he was about 30 years of age. He was a Communist Party member. Under the Director of Sovtanker were the following individuals and sections: Deputy Director (Zamiatitel); the dispatchers' section (the most important part of the organization); engineering sections; personnel, supply, and other sections, including warehouses; political section (Politotdel - this branch had authority over all the political officers to be found on the tankers and sent out visiting instructors to the ships); and the military section (Voennoi Otdel - which kept a list of military reserve personnel employed by Sovtanker).

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3. Sovtanker was the only shipping administration for water transport of oil in the USSR, to Soviet and foreign ports. However, in Baku, other tankers were based, which came under another organization called the Caspian Petroleum Shipping Administration (Upravleniya Neftenalivnovo Caspiskovo Parakhodstvo). The tankers based in Baku had only short routes. The main route was from Baku to Astrakhan anchorage. The various fleets of the Soviet Navy also had their own tankers, but these were few in number and were used only to supply the Navy's ships.
4. Many of the tankers assigned to Sovtanker were sent for periods as long as from five to eight years to Vladivostok. Excluding the above ships, the basic tanker fleet of Sovtanker as of June 1941 was:

<u>Name of Tanker:</u>	<u>Where Manufactured:</u>	<u>Approximate Cargo Capacity in Tons:</u>
Sergo	USSR	12,000
Sovetskaya Neft	Foreign Built	14,000
Stalin	USSR (built about 1930, good condition)	12,000
Kuibyshev	USSR (built before 1917, ex-cargo vessel, poor condition)	5,000
Avanesov	Sweden (built in late 1920's, good condition)	9,000
Kreml	USSR	12,000
Moskva	USSR	8,000
Sakhalin	USSR	8,000
Stakhanovets	USSR (built before 1917, poor condition)	1,000
Yalta	? (built about 1930, good condition)	500
?	? (built about 1935, good condition)	500
Plus a few others		

As of mid-1941 the tankers listed above which had been built in the USSR were in good condition as at that time they were only from five to 10 years old. The tankers of Sovtanker carried petroleum and petroleum products, such as gasoline and lubricating oils. Several of the tankers listed above had earlier been called by such names as Soyuz Vodnikov, Soyuz Gornorabochikh, and Soyuz Metalistov (ie, they were named after labor unions). However, the large oil tankers, from 1932 on, had their names changed to such designations as Stalin and Kreml.

5. The main tanker routes were:
- A. Home Routes -
 - Batum-Odessa (the main route)
 - Tuapse - Odessa
 - Novorossisk - various small ports on the Black and Asov Seas
 - B. Foreign Routes -
 - From Batum and from Tuapse to Vladivostok
 - From Batum and from Tuapse to Germany and other foreign countries.
6. The frequency of the tankers' voyages on the above routes depended upon the current demand for petroleum products. In regard to traffic norms, each ship was set a monthly ton-mile norm and this varied with circumstances.

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